639
R342
1923/24

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF SHELL FISHERIES

FOR THE

FISCAL YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1924

AS MADE TO THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AT ITS

JANUARY SESSION, 1925

THE LIBRARY OF THE
MAY 21 1925
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

PROVIDENCE:
E. L. FREEMAN COMPANY, PRINTERS
1925

REMOTE STORAGE

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF SHELL FISHERIES

FOR THE

FISCAL YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1924

AS MADE TO THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AT ITS

JANUARY SESSION, 1925

THE LIBRARY OF THE
MAY 21 1925
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

PROVIDENCE:
E. L. FREEMAN COMPANY, PRINTERS
1925

Commissioners of Shell Fisheries

AND THEIR DEPUTIES

1925

COMMISSIONERS OF SHELL FISHERIES

Edward Atchison	P. O. Address,	Slatersville, R. I.
Milton Duckworth	" " "	Carolina, R. I.
Henry K. Littlefield	" " "	New Shoreham, R. I.
Arthur L. Smith	" " "	Barrington, R. I.
Charles F. Brooks	" " "	Conimicut, R. I.

CLERK

Sylvester K. M. Robertson	P. O. Address,	Lakewood, R. I.
Charles W. Collins, Ass't Clerk	" " "	Providence, R. I.

ENGINEER

Walter W. Massie	P. O. Address,	Cranston, R. I.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONERS OF SHELL FISHERIES

Amos S. Harris	P. O. Address,	Warwick, R. I.
William B. Welden	" " "	Providence, R. I.
Leman Wardsworth	" " "	Wickford, R. I.
Oliver G. Hicks	" " "	Bristol, R. I.
John T. Smith	" " "	Warren, R. I.
Sylvanus Willis	" " "	New Shoreham, R. I.
Thomas J. Slade	" " "	Pawtucket, R. I.

BIOLOGIST AND BACTERIOLOGIST

Stephen DeM. Gage	P. O. Address,	Providence, R. I.

INSPECTOR OF OYSTER HOUSES

Seth Walton	P. O. Address,	Providence, R. I.

639
R342
1923/24

REMOTE STORAGE

REPORT

To the Honorable General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations:

GENTLEMEN:—We, the undersigned Commissioners of Shell Fisheries, beg leave to report to your Honorable Body the condition of the Department of Shell Fisheries, together with the acts of the Commission relative thereto. This report is made in accordance with the provisions of the law, and covers a period of twelve months ending November 30th, 1924. This report contains the receipts and disbursements of the Department, together with the names and addresses of lease holders of oyster ground within the State, also the number of acres leased and the amount of rental due the State from each lease holder, as of record in the office of the Commissioners of Shell Fisheries on the thirtieth day of November, 1924.

OYSTER INDUSTRY.

We are of an opinion that the Oyster Industry is bound to improve, as for the first time in a number of years there has been quite a large "set" of oysters in different sections of Narragansett Bay, and this "set" means a great deal to the oyster growers, and the salvation of the oyster industry in this State.

For the past number of years the oyster growers have been compelled to procure oyster "set" or small oysters from other States, even as far south as Maryland, which was a great expense to the different growers. This oyster "set" of 1924, should greatly relieve this serious situation, and if the general waters of Narragansett Bay still remains the same, or are improved, a still larger "set" is anticipated. If the oyster "set" can increase year by year, it will mean the leasing of

oyster ground for oyster culture, and an increase of fixed revenue to the State.

At the January Session of 1921, Chapter 203, entitled "Of Private and Several Oyster Fisheries," was amended, reducing the rental of leased oyster ground by one-half. This amendment has of necessity cut the revenue in two, and while it has furnished the relief asked for by the lessees of oyster ground, it must be remembered that allowances must be made in the financial statement of the Commission for this fact. We believe that until the time comes when a large commercial "set" of oysters appear in our Bay that the oyster industry will remain practically stationary. In other words, as we asserted last year, we firmly believe that the bottom has been reached, and we believe that the business of the past year has borne out our assertion. A glance at the table appended to this report will give one the impression that our downward progress has stopped.

For the improvement of the oyster industry, the Commissioners of Shell Fisheries have had conferences with many of the oyster growers and with members of the Oyster Growers Association, who have sought to co-operate with the Commissioners to better the oyster industry. Our attention was called to the illegal poaching, stealing or violation of the Shell Fish Laws, and mainly to the loss of oysters by stealing from the several oyster growers, they maintain, and we recommend a more drastic law in increasing the minimum penalty for those who illegally take oysters from the leased oyster ground.

The important question of artifically or propagating oyster "set" is a most important subject, for as we have stated, the future of the oyster industry of the State of Rhode Island depends primarily on the oyster "set." Other States are giving this subject serious consideration, and the State of New York after making an appropriation have made extensive experiments. The Commissioners of Shell Fisheries have made an exhaustive study of this problem, having met with the Commissioners of other States, we inspected the experimental station of the State of New York, located on Long Island, thousands of oysters at this Station had been artifically raised from

oyster spat, and the Commissioners intend to co-operate and keep in touch with the different experimental stations regarding future experiments in the artificial raising of oysters.

(CHAPTER 852) "Regulating the Taking of Shell Fish from the free and Common Fisheries."

In general we believe this law is a good one, as it enables a person who may be temporarily out of employment to gather for his own use, without a license a bushel of clams, quahaugs, or oysters from our shores, sell them and provide thereby to some extent at least some of the necessities of life, as well as furnishing a good and wholesome food for himself and his family.

(CHAPTER 209) "Of Scollop Fisheries."

This past year, and the preceding year have been the best two years for scollops, both as to quality and the abundance of the crop. It having been estimated that 300,000 bushels of scollops have been obtained in Narragansett Bay and its tributaries. While the scollop season of 1924, did not yield or make as great a return as the preceding year, we feel as a whole, that the scollop yield was an excellent one, and the outlook for 1925 is most promising. While the State has not received a direct revenue from the crop of scollops, many citizens have received an excellent income from the marketing of the scollop, which were of a very fine quality.

In our previous report the Commissioners of Shell Fisheries recommended the first day of opening scollops to be advanced one month, from September 1st, to October 1st, (September 1st, being the first day in which scollops may be procured each year) as scollops greatly increase in size and growth during the month of September, the yield would be much larger, and an increased revenue would be received by those procuring scollops.

(CHAPTER 1243) "Of the protection of Quahaugs."

The crop of quahaugs or littlenecks for the year 1924 was most abundant. There were thousands of bushels of quahaugs or littlenecks in the Sakonnet River, East Greenwich Bay and other localities,

and the crop for the coming year is a most excellent one. In previous years, littlenecks or quahaugs were centered largely in East Greenwich Bay, but now many parts of the Bay and its tributaries have the best set of years.

A few years ago, you may recall, that the Commissioners called to your attention that clams were almost extinct on the shores of Narragansett Bay, and the Commissioners of Shell Fisheries have given this subject ample thought and consideration, in closing certain areas where clams had set, it allowed growth and increase, and during this past year thousands of bushels of excellent clams have been procured along the shores and tributaries of Narragansett Bay. The clam set is very abundant, and the outlook for 1925 is excellent.

Inspection of Oyster Houses.

Under the provisions of Chapter 233 the Commissioners of Shell Fisheries have supervision over the premises where shell fish are opened, packed or prepared for the trade, to make such sanitary regulations as to the handling of shell fish as will safeguard the public. We are able to report that the inspection of oyster houses has been in charge during the past year of Mr. Seth Walton, who has efficiently and well performed the duties of that office, reports have been made to this office weekly, and we are pleased to report that the regulations have been observed, that the houses are kept clean and sanitary, and in general are up to the requirements of the Federal and State regulations governing the preparation of food products.

The United States Food and Drug Inspectors have inspected several oyster houses in the State of Rhode Island, and they report that the oysters of Narragansett Bay and the oyster houses rank very highly.

Leased Ground.

The number of acres of ground under lease, as shown recorded in the books of this office on November 30, 1924, is as follows: 2,347.1 acres at $5.00 per acre, and 1,512.1 acres at $2.50 per acre. Making a total of 3,859.2 acres.

REPORT OF THE CHEMIST AND SANITARY ENGINEER OF THE STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

Commissioners of Shell Fisheries:

GENTLEMEN:—The sanitary investigations carried out for you during 1924 have included the usual fall examination of oysters from leased oyster grounds, and a brief study of the relative sanitary condition of clams and quahaugs from the easterly side of upper Narragansett Bay.

Sanitary examinations were made of oysters collected from leased beds in the Longmeadow and Nayatt areas on September 24th, from the Kickemuit and the Portsmouth-Tiverton areas on September 25th, and from the Bristol area on October 1st. These examinations showed the oysters to have low scores, and the issuance of sanitary certificates for all leased beds in these areas was recommended. Examination of oysters from beds in the Warren area was made on October 14th. On this date the outlying beds were found to show low scores, but scores above the passing mark were obtained on oysters from beds located in the Warren River which are subject to the direct influence of the sewage discharged from the town of Warren. It was therefore recommended that sanitary certificates be granted for the outlying portions of this area only.

At your request a number of successive examinations were made of clams and quahaugs from the easterly side of the upper Bay, at points between Sabine Point and Bullock's Point. The result of these examinations showed that during February and March, when the water was cold, the sanitary scores of quahaugs were low, but that an increase in the scores occurred as the water became warmer. While the results obtained were relatively few in number, they in-

dicated that it might be safe to take quahaugs from this section for use as food during the winter, although such quahaugs could not be considered a safe food during the summer and fall seasons. The clams from these areas showed many high scores and indicated that the present restrictions on the taking of such clams for food should not be removed.

Respectfully submitted,

STEPHEN DeM. GAGE,

Chemist and Sanitary Engineer.

Financial Statement of the Oyster Industry from December 1st, 1923, to November 30th, 1924.

Receipts.

Received from rent of oyster ground	$14,372 45
Received from interest	84 65
Received from fees (transfer)	24 00
Received from Fishermen's Licenses	1,180 00
Received from Scollop Licenses	1,485 00
	$17,146 10

Disbursements Allowed by Commissioners of Shell Fisheries. Salaries Provided by Law.

Salaries of Commissioners		$2,500 00
Salary of Clerk		2,500 00
For Assistant Clerk		1,200 00
		$6,200 00
Appropriation allowed for expenses of Department		$12,000 00
Salaries of Deputies	$6,732 38	
Engineering and Surveying	285 00	
Stenographer	960 00	
Inspector of Oyster Houses	500 00	
Boat numbers	154 72	
Advertising Cancellations	18 63	
Printing	175 00	
Travelling expenses of Commissioners	298 93	
Postage and Office Supplies	189 05	
Maps	61 28	
Toll Calls	5 13	
Operating and expenses of boat	757 87	
		$10,137 99
Appropriation allowed for expenses of Department		2,000 00
Amount spent	$10,137 99	
Unexpended balance	1,862 01	
		$12,000 00
Receipts for the year 1924		17,146 10
Salaries provided by law	$6,200 00	
Expenses of Department		16,337 99
Net revenue		$808 11

ALPHABETICAL LIST

Of names of lessees of oyster ground with the number of acres held by each, and the amount of rental received by the State for same.

Name.	Town.	Acres, $5.00	Acres, $2.50	Total Acres.	Amount.
American Oyster Corp.	Providence	107.8	45.5	153.3	$652.75
Anthony, Henry	Warwick	.....	5.0	5.0	12.50
Baker, Joseph	N. Kingstown	12.3	6.1	18.4	76.75
Barnes, Jeremiah	Westerly	1.5	.....	1.5	7.50
Beacon Oyster Co	Wickford	102.9	33.9	136.8	599.25
Bellmore, Fred J.	E. Greenwich	7.0	.....	7.0	35.00
Blount, Eddie B	Warren	29.8	16.4	46.2	190.00
Blount, E. B. & Son	Warren	6.4	6.0	12.4	47.00
Bourne, John E.	Providence	29.1	12.3	41.4	176.25
Bowden, J. J. & Son	Bristol	8.0	.....	8.0	40.00
Bowden & Carter	Barrington	1.0	.....	1.0	5.00
Briggs, John C	E. Greenwich	.....	18.0	18.0	45.00
Buckingham, E. M.	Warren	32.6	.....	32.6	163.00
Cape Ann Fish Co	Providence	33.7	5.7	39.4	182.75
Coggeshall Bros	Newport	4.2	.....	4.2	21.00
Coggeshall, Josiah	Warren	0.1	5.9	6.0	15.25
Connolly, Thomas H	Warren	170.2	91.3	261.5	1,079.25
Daniels, William W	Barrington	110.1	0.7	110.8	552.25
Field, Waterman E	Warwick	8.5	.....	8.5	42.50
Field, Waterman E., Jr	Warwick	12.0	29.4	41.4	133.50
Fortin, James	E. Greenwich	1.8	10.2	12.0	34.50
Gorman, Joseph	E. Greenwich	.....	30.0	30.0	75.00
Greer, John J	Warwick	.....	6.0	6.0	15.00
Greene, George T	Warren	59.8	17.7	77.5	343.25
Havens, Charles E	Warwick	4.0	.....	4.0	20.00
Havens, L. & W. D	Warwick	4.0	.....	4.0	20.00
Higgins, R. R. (R. I.)	Barrington	128.9	42.3	171.2	750.25
Jacobson, Arthur	Warren	.....	22.5	22.5	56.25
Lasell, Henry I	N. Kingstown	.....	12.5	12.5	31.25

ALPHABETICAL LIST—Concluded.

Name.	Town.	Acres. $5.00	Acres. $2.50	Total Acres.	Amount.
Narragansett Bay Oyster Co....	Providence.....	733.7	702.0	1,435.7	$5,423.50
Northup, Joseph.....	Warwick.....	.....	10.0	10.0	25.00
Pettis, Frank C.....	Providence.....	27.6	.....	27.6	138.00
R. I. Fish Co.....	Providence.....	31.5	.....	31.5	157.50
R. I. Oyster Farms Co.....	E. Providence.....	200.4	251.1	451.5	1,629.75
Rooks, Benjamin D.....	Warren.....	59.3	18.3	77.6	342.25
Rowe, Henry C.....	Westerly.....	191.2	9.3	200.5	979.25
Shepard, Wilhelmina.....	Bristol.....	102.4	21.4	123.8	565.50
Sherman, Jonathan I.....	Warwick.....	.....	10.0	10.0	25.00
Slocum, Frank C.....	Bristol.....	9.5	.....	9.5	47.50
Smith, Fred G.....	N. Kingstown.....	115.2	63.2	178.4	734.00
Wilcox, Ernest C.....	Warwick.....	.....	5.0	5.0	12.50
Winstead, Clarence.....	Warwick.....	0.6	4.4	5.0	14.00

All of which is respectfully submitted.

EDWARD ATCHISON,
MILTON DUCKWORTH,
HENRY K. LITTLEFIELD,
ARTHUR L. SMITH,
CHARLES F. BROOKS.

Commissioners of Shell Fisheries.

THE LIBRARY OF THE
MAY 21 1925
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

3 0112 105825639